TRAIN of THOUGHT

5

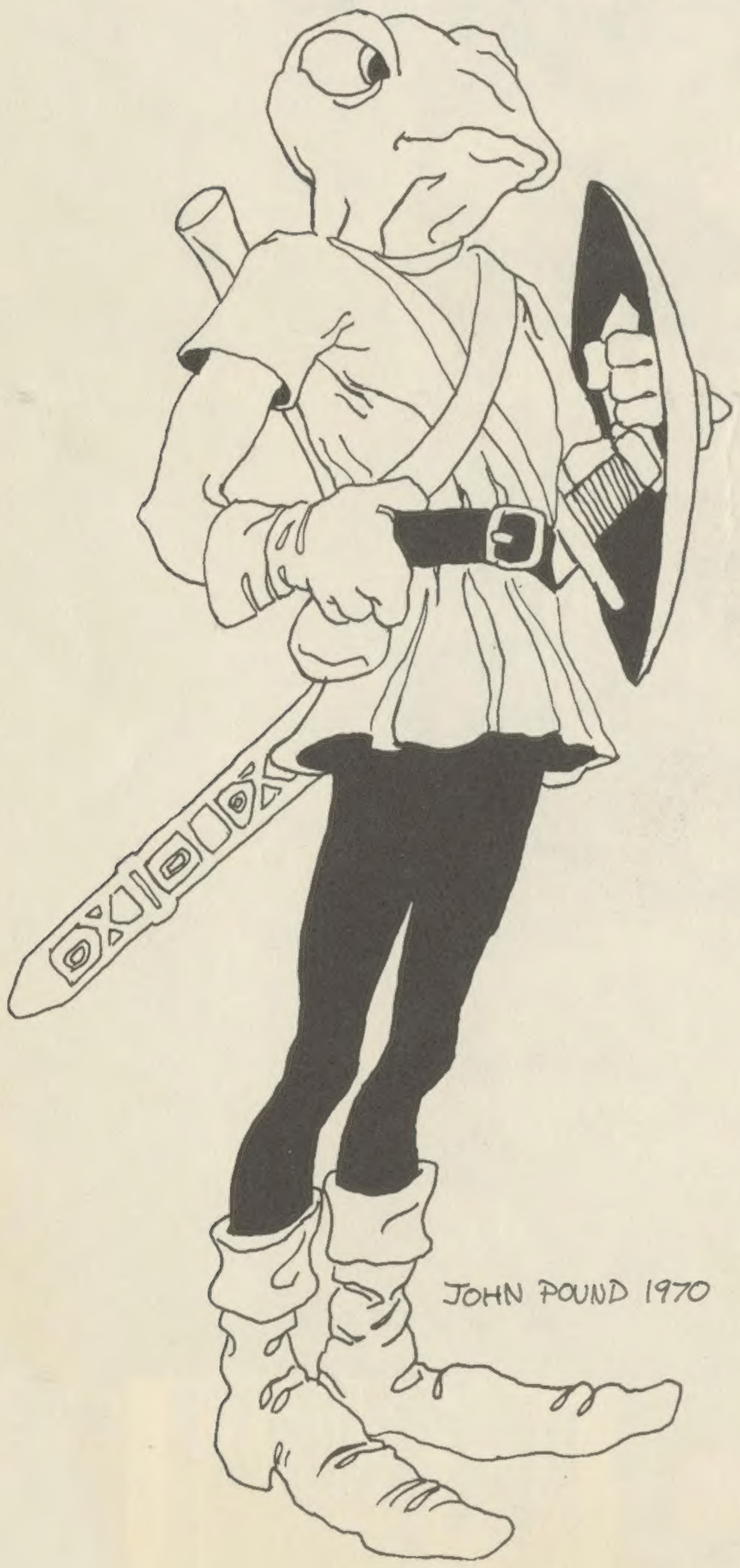
Well,it's number 5 from February of 1971. That's right,I'm here again.I'm sure you will notice the vast amount of difference between this issue and the last one (that's because I used different material,you kribitz).Aside from the fact that this is a different issue than #4 there have been some changes.First of all I have put all of the text on reduction;thus,you get more for your money.I also made less typos and errors than last issue.This is because last issue I got caught up in the deadline blues. I didn't get the material until rather late and I had set myself an unalterable deadline.In the future this will not happen so don't worry.

I Guess It's Time For Apologies

I did it again.I didn't mention two of the contibutors. Ray Cioni did the "Zippy the Hippy" cartoon and Cary Bradely did the "I Conjure Morlak" picture.Sorry about that Ray and Cary.

Great News

Yes,great news! I'M going to have an ad in Marvel comics.That's right!An ad in the Marvel Comics Group! It will be for selling my comics. The ad will appear in June.It will be exactly twice the size Richard Alf's old add or Brian Laurence's current ad, and it will have a blue border with a yellow interior.This ad will increase my business many fold. Aside from having a lot more money I shall be able to contact many more people and thus be able to increase my circulation to a point where the zine supports itself With more money and a higher circulation T.O.T. will really begin to change. Just stick with it and watch it change.My page count should go up and I will eventually have a wrap-around binding.I will also be able to afford half-tones. This will inable me to print paintings.



In Future Issues

In the future issues you will see a variety of material.In one issue you will be seeing a new Forbush Man story by John Pound.The Kirby interview will be here for the next two issues.I will start featuring paintings,in black and white,and will even try to silk screen a cover in color. There will be more art,more articles,more cartoon strips, and just plain more of everything.

Speaking Of The Kirby Interview

Last Christmas vacation a group of us in San Diego visited Kirby and I recorded the conversation.It was really a conversation and not an interview.It was a really great happening and I recorded three or more hours of conversation. The conversation was a bit slow at first but it really picked up.The beginning is presented in this issue and the rest will appear in the next twoo issues.Din't miss the middle and end whatever you do.I shall list a few of the items to be discussed in the future parts of the Kirby conversation: 1)Why superheroes are anatomically emasculated 2)Kirby's view of underground comics 3)What Kirby thinks about how Marvel is handling his characters 4)Info on the new comics 5)Kirby's real name and why he changed it and much,much more!

Plugs

Last time I told you to buy the Comic Collector's Friend,so why didn't you do it? Can't you chance 25¢ on my opinions? The CCF features a serialized story by John Ostapkovich that is just great.It has humorous interviews,articles, stories and it's only 25¢.Send that 25¢ off today to:

Samuel P. Schraeger
1611 Drummond
Asbury Park,N.J.

I would also like to recommend that you buy National Lampoon.This humor magazine is fantastic. It makes Mad look like Blast.This is not to be missed.This month's is the special "Heads and other freaks" issue.Buy it.

Credits

The cover was done by Jack Kirby.The picture on page 12 and the doodle on the back were rendered by Gerald Colucci.The rest was created by John Pound.

Convention ...

Copies of the progaram book from last years convention are still available at $1 appeice.

This years convention is going to have a fantastic line-up.The preliminary guest list includes Jack Kirby,Carmine Infantino,Ray Bradbury,Edmond Hamilton and John Pound(I did that for you John). These people will deffinatly appear. Many haven't given us answers yet and others,such as Stan Lee,say they won't be able to say yes or no until the summer.The con,the San Diego Golden State Comic Con,will happen on August 6,7,8. Right now we are fairly sure that it will be held on the UCSD campus.We have all of the signatures we need,including the Dean's, except for one for use of the beautiful campus. If it is held on the campus the room rates will be very low.don't miss this convention if you can help it.

Well I guess it's...

about time to get on with the issue.I think your really going to enjoy this one.I even used Instant-Type for some of the titles.So enjoy this issue and forget to send in 30¢ for the next issue,#6.

"Who is the real Ramon de la Flores?"

I MET KIRBY!

...THE THING THAT DREW!

OOU stands for One Of Us (I'm too lazy to print each speakers name

Kirby: The idea of the anti life equation is that all Darkseid has to do is say a word and you become a slave.That's what he's after.He likes that and the fact that he likes that makes him valid. See? Because he exists and his idea exists,so why the hell shouldn't that be valid? That's the way Darkseid looks at things,and he's going to get what he wants in his own way.He's very ruthless and he's very smart...

OOU:You know,that Infinity Man seems as powerful as Darkseid,and even a lot more powerful than Superman.

Kirby: No,he's not as powerful as Darkseid. Well, he has intense power but Darkseid is,as the story enfolds...I mean his powers are almost as great as Darkseid's but there's something about Darkseid that is universally overpowering.He is evil itself,or what we consider evil.

OOU: Is Infinity Man more powerful than Superman? Well, there's that one scene where those guys that look like robots pound Superman into the ground (in the Forever People comic).

Kirby: But remember, they had the strength of entire galaxies.Heavy mass galaxies.

OOU: But that other guy just sort of tossed them around.

Kirby: Well Superman might be able to throw him around,but just not as easily as he throws everything else around. Power is relative.

OOU: In about three issues of Jimmy Olsen you've changed the entire image of Superman.It's like here's Superman coasting along all these years and all of a sudden it's like a new universe.The whole metropolis,everything,is changed around. Are you going to continue to use Superman?

Kirby: Yes I am.Superman will continue as a character in many of these stories.In the first story we thought that it would be important to use him and see how relative he would be to that kind of thing.And Superman is relative. Superman has,despite the fact that he is a super being,emotions just like everyone else.He's not a robot.If I were a super being I'd just be a human being with super powers which is the way I see Superman.He's a human being with super powers and he can be lonely,he has emotions,he can be in love,he can hate people,he hates evil.

OOU: That would be the same idea as at Marvel wouldn't it? You know,that super heroes have feelings and all that.

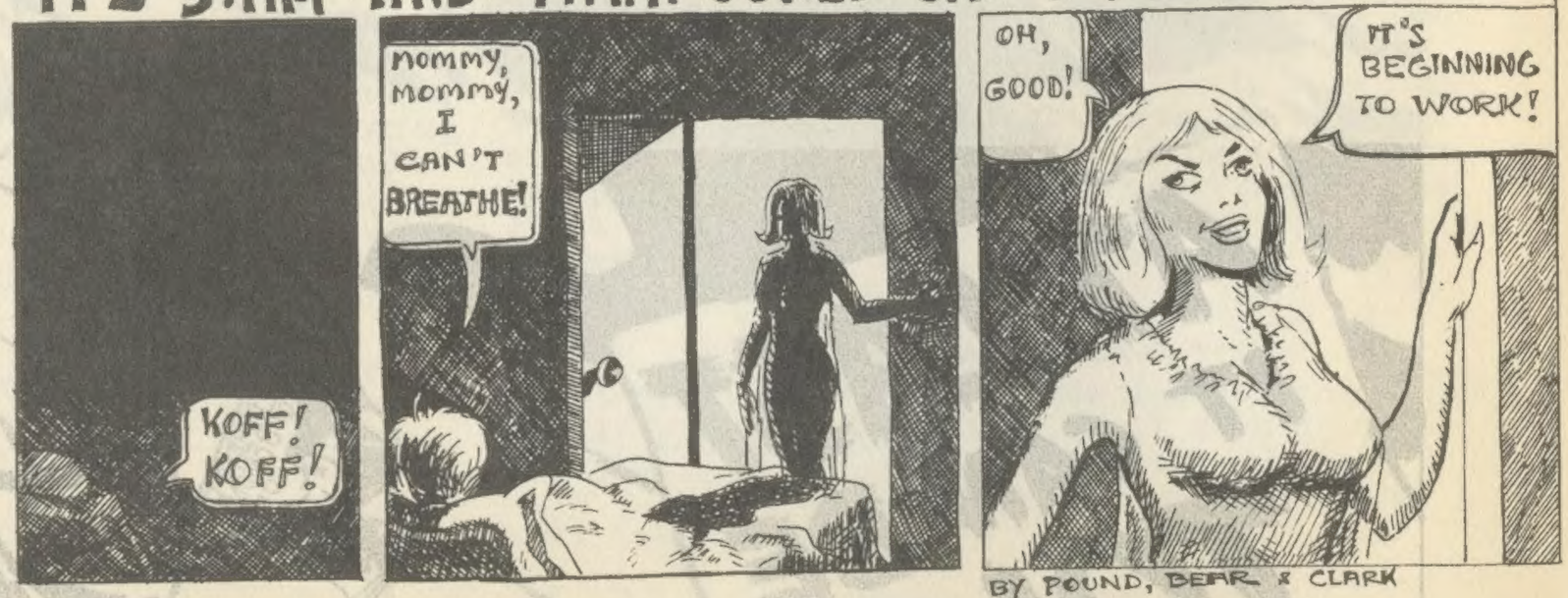
Kirby: Yes,but Superman is invincible,and Superman is the first say super being to come into literary life.There he is alone.That's the way I see him.If I were a Superman among two billion people,despite the fact that I was a super being,I'd feel pretty insecure.For instance say I was a white hunter in Africa and I were to walk into a cannibal village.Despite the fact that I had a gun and they didn't,despite the fact that I had ammunition and they didn't,I'd feel pretty insecure,despite the fact that I could probably shoot my way out. Superman is alone in our world.

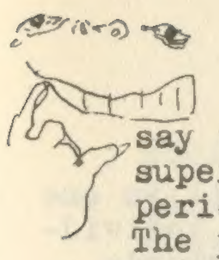
OOU: What about all of the other super people like Supergirl and Kandor?

Kirby: That's very little help in a world of two, three billion people.Two,three billion people is a lot of people.If suddenly two,three billion people developed a psycosis,say they felt you were a danger.For instance if some body got up before two,three billion people and said "Superman is a danger.What if Superman didn't want to be good? What if Superman wanted to be evil? What if Superman wanted to impose his power on us? That's the way human beings think.Did you ever feel that although you gave authority to some people they might abuse it? Suppose that someone said that Super man might abuse his powers and reason to harm us? Suppose you believed him? What would you do?You'd try to kill Superman.That's what Superman faces. Superman faces three billion inferior people.And not only inferior,but Superman has to make sure they don't feel insecure about the fact that they're inferior to him. That's Superman's problem or else he'd better take off for the moon.

OOU: What's this new change in Superman? Is he going to be weaker than he used to be?

Kirby: No,not weaker,but he's going to be a real person.He's going to be a real person with super powers against other people with super powers. And there's not only going to be other people with super powers but ordinary people who, although they don't have super powers,may have to make super efforts.Which I think is a good thing, I think the noblest part of man is the fact that he could transcend himself if he really tried.I mean man is a very pliable object. It's been proven that you can put a man in 120 degrees of heat,hold him there for a certain amount of time and this guy,he's not going to walk out chipper but he's going to walk out.Man has been subjected to what they might call killing stress and he's walked out of that.Man is a very pliable animal.In fact I underate stress.Man can do something we might consider a super act.Man can bend steel and under stress he might be able to bend some even more intractible object.Man with training can perform super acts.In otherwords man can transcend himself in many ways. You take a man like Leonardo Da Vinci who transcended the ordinary by so many different accomplishments in so many different fields because he was a curious man who made a super act out of his own curiosity.He was a master painter,a master architect,and I'm not talking about an ordinary mechanic.He was a master at everything he did because he had that transcendant quality of making a super act of whatever he did,because he had insatible curiosity. Who is to

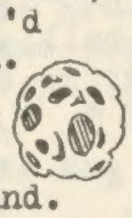




say that man hasn't got the power to become a super being because we happen to be in a time period where men certainly aren't super beings. The possibility exists mentally,physically,and possibly even other ways.We just can't see right now. So why not ordinary people contending with Superman? That's what I've got in the stories. I'm going to have ordinary people engaged in great efforts that make them more than they are, and super beings with super powers deciding that it may be more fun to be a human being. There may come times when it's wrong to use a super power, or weak to use a super power.Darkseid himself,the villain of the piece,,at one point decides not to use his power because he's a professional and he feels that he's using his powers on a second rater and it would demean his own profession to use that power,so Darkseid will not harm him. Darkseid lets his victim go saying that it would denigrate his own abilities to destroy that man. Darkseid,although he's evil,is too much of an admirer of his own power or his own stature to denigrate himself.He won't do it.

OOU: It seems like you've created another character like Doctor Doom.It's like he's evil but he has his own code.

Kirby: Of course.Some of the most virtuous men are murderers by the fact that they stick to their own principles.Hitler was a virtuous man in the context of his own principles.He initiated a pretty dirty hour as far as humanity was concerned but the idea is that he did it for his own reasons.They were mad reasons,but he felt that he was sticking to his principles. So even an insane man may have an insane code of ethics. Some people will kill for second rate reasons and that makes their act even more monsterous. The fact that a man will kill for a little money or kill for unecessary reasons as the thrill of it might be looked down upon by a proffessional killer.He wouldn't kill for a few dollars or for the thrill of it. The professional murderer would kill for good money and good reasons and he would consider himself a craftsman.As Darkseid does.Darkseid is very evil.He's the equivalent of a mass murderer,but he wouldn't waste his super powers on just one individual.He wouldn't go out of his way just to kill one man, it would be ridiculous.He wouldn't do it.He'd just walk away.That's how my villains think.



OOU: Why has earth been chosen as being so important to him?

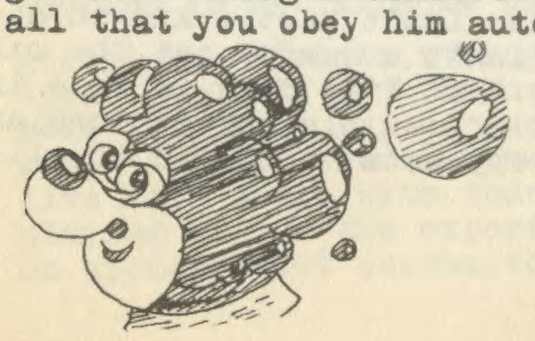
Kirby: Because earth becomes a testing ground. This is where we have thinking animals,and there's the principle of anti life.If someone took control of your mind and you were not able to think as yourself any longer you would no longer be yourself.You'd be something in his command.You as an individual would be dead.That's anti life. In otherwords if you gave yourself to some cause,and gave up everything as an individual and you were at the beck and call of some leader you would be dead as an individual.And that's what Darkseid wants.He wants control of everybody. If he says "You come here and go out and get me a bologna sandwich" and if it was snowing outside and you weren't wearing any shoes and it was 38 degrees below zero and this guy says "Go out and get me a bologna sandwich" and you have go through all that you obey him automatically,you obey him meekley.You walk out without a coat and you freeze to death.He doesn't care.You do it anyway despite the fact that you don't want to do it.Your dead as an individual.You have no choice.You go out there and you freeze to death,you get a bologna sandwich, and you bring it back.That's all your going to do. You can't object and you have no stature as a person.You're dead.A slave is a dead man.That's what Darkseid wants.Darkseid wants complete subjugation of everything at a word,his word.He wants every thinking thing under his control.I believe it's an evil concept but he doesn't think so. Not if he's Darkseid.If you had the power you might not dislike the idea.Everybody sees the world from where they sit.It may be uncomfortable for the next guy but you think it's great.The right idea to Darkseid is anything that benefits him. He isn't going to worry about you.He sees the world from where he sits,and of course what he sees is big.He's a big man.Darkseid is a tremendous,powerful,evil figure,and he's going to see everything in a cosmic view.He's not going to see a view of the candy store around the corner or what's playing at the Palladium next week.Darkseid is going to see everything in an overpowering cosmic view,and of course what else would he want but complete subjugation of everything? Earth is included in that everything,and my concept is that somewhere on earth is someone who can solve the anti life equation and Darkseid is after that poor soul.What happens is he shakes up everything He shakes up cities and creates all kinds of plots.

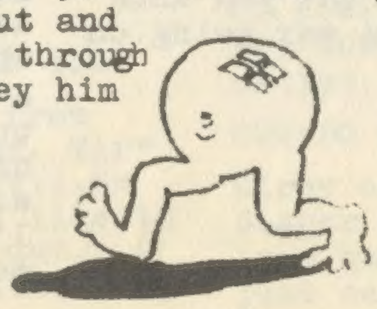
OOU:Does he have any equal,or is he the most powerful?

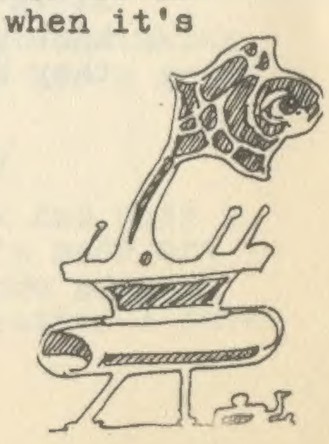
Kirby: No actually he's not the most powerful,but he's the most relentless.In otherwords Darkseid is strictly a first rater.I don't classify gods as far as their power goes.I classify them as far as their personality goes.Each god,if he used his power right,could defeat another god.If I used my power right I could defeat anyone on earth if I wanted to. As a man,if I used my physical strength at its best I could overpower anybody I wanted to. If I did it right.It's the same way with the gods. If they used their superpowers right they could defeat any other god. Darkseid is no different except that Darkseid is an evil guy with a lot of class.He's the kind of guy that might outthink you,and with superpowers involved it could be in a very dangerous and earthshaking way.

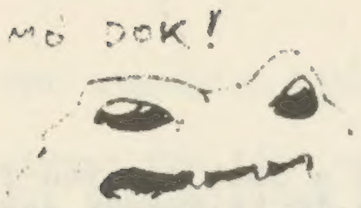
OOU: Have you ever thought of creating a character that was a hero but was also nonviolent? Who was opposed to people smashing each other in the face?

Kirby: The Forever People are nonviolent.The Forever people are a challenge to comics,I feel, because although they're engaged in violent activities they never fight.The nearest they come to fighting is this fella,Big Bear,who is just so strong that he could lean against a pole and that's it.The Forever People are a challenge to see how nonviolence can work in comics. I feel that nonviolence coupled with some kind of sustaining influence can work in comics.I don't feel that you have to show blood and gore and guts. I think it's repellent.I've seen enough of it in its reality,and it's just as repellent when it's









drawn as in reality.I see nothing of any value in anything that has what you call shock value. I see nothing in that except using that sort of thing to prove a point.In otherwords if you're making an antiwar document or if you're trying to tell the truth about a certain subject,and the blood and the gore was a part of that subject, I wouldn't omit it. If were going to make an ex- pose on anything I would show anything connected with it.For instance in a gangster movie I would show the results of being a gangster--the life activities as well as the end and death.I would show exactly how it is they ended.I would show the bullet holes because it's part of the picture,but I wouldn't exploit it for its value alone.I see no entertainment in that sort of thing.

OOU:Do you think you'll be able to appeal to the little kids as well as the serious readers?

Kirby: Of course it's a problem.Take a movie,if a picture is constructed for universal viewing it's got to have something for everybody.Part of the thing,the thinking part, will be analyzed by people who like heavy stuff.I'm putting plenty of action into it,plenty of gimmicks,plenty of different background.In otherwords,I know I might fail at it,but I'm trying to make it a universal thing if I can. That's a challenge in itself.It's a heavy subject.The god stuff always was.I'm trying to put something into it to give it an iffinity to the times themselves. I feel these are times when that kind of thing is felt. These are times when we're all operating on the edge of holocaust,Apokolips,and everybody is living with the bomb.It's a Strangelove kind of time,so I felt that the characters might reflect that sort of thing.There's the problem of making all of your characters different.There's the problem of making them reflect everything that is good or bad inside of us.Our weaknesses and our strengths,and our potential for good and evil.It's enormous.I'm trying to get all that across in an entertaining sort of way.Of course I can't do it all in three or four issues.In Marvel it took five years,and my problem was that I couldn't do a simple story--I had to create an instant world in each magazine.An instant world with everything in it to get the ball rolling. Say if I had done a foreign intrigue story.Just a story say of a stolen diamond or a stolen national secret of some kind.The hero would have to go after it and there would be a lot of gimmickry and a lot of shooting.Yet to have an individual story you'd establish a single character.You wouldn't know where he came from, or what he was really like.You might have to wait out an entire series of books until you really knew anything about him.I could've gone that route,but I was forced to go the other way.I'm coming in from the other end.I'm coming in with the whole ball of wax which I have to unravel.I could've come in with just one character and developed his friends,but from what I've done here you know everybody.You know where they came from.You don't know exactly what kind of a world it is but you know it isn't like earth.You don't know what kind of powers they have but you know they have powers.You know there's a war going on between good and evil.You've got that all in one issue.What I have to do is seperate the individual action from the mass action.In otherwords there might be an adventure with just Darkseid or one of the Forever People,but you'll know them. You'll know what kind of people they are from the first issue.

OOU: On the way up here we were talking about the Forever People and each of us has a little different concept about the thing.Just to touch on a few things we liked the idea that they had never seen Superman before.This gives us the chance to see Superman in a new light,through their eyes.Then this concept,the way I see it, that when you consolidate the four of these kids they become Infinity Man.

Kirby: Right.

OOU: There was a little difference of opinion. Some of them thought that they just disappeared and he appeared,but what I got out of it was that you were trying to say that here was brotherhood. You've got a negroe,a wild motorcycle-type,an intellectual,and a poet,the hippie,which is a kind of cross section of life.Right?

Kirby:Yeah,sure.

OOU: But the message is that join together in brotherhood and you become one solid force of good.

Kirby: Yes.And of course there could be a solid force of evil too. These same people can have equal,evil counterparts.I mean a poet doesn't always have to be good.You take Ezra Pound,he was a poet in the classic sense,he was a fine poet.Nothing wrong with his poetry except he was a nazi.He had a different view than we did.You have a picture there of a poet,but a different type of poet.Of course with other types of people you've got corresponding types.That's what the New Gods and the Forever people will try to say. That there's a good and bad in all of us.We have to face them both, and sometime we have to make a decision between each.It's nothing we can avoid. It's nothing we can rant against.Each individual has to make his own decision on it.

OOU: On the first story(Forever People)the motive is the old stand-by,the damsel in distress.What motives have you got for these Forever People coming out in the future issues?

Kirby: The Forever People,as I said before,is a reflection of our times like the New Gods.We live in a time where we have the bomb and Apokolips all around us.Somebody is always talking about holocaust and about the whole thing blowing.Then we live in the kind of time where everybody says, "Well,that doesn't have to happen.We're gonna do great.We're gonna take all of these things that we make for destruction and we're going to do good things and build up some kind of universal brotherhood." Now that may happen too.I think that's a good thought. I have these two worlds, Apokolips and New Genisis.There could be a New Genisis for all I know.That's the way I see it. It's heavy stuff of course,but I think it's going to have to unravel to become the kind of a thing it is.I'm going to have to unravel all the characters so that you really get to know them and know what their powers are.For instance this kid in a cowboy hat,Seriphan,isn't just a kid in a cowboy hat because it isn't a cowboy hat.The others have other gimmicks.What I've done is come in with the whole ball of wax,plopped it down,and I'm going to ask everyone's patience to allow me to unravel it.

OOU:Is Mark Moonrider Mark Evanier?

Kirby:No,nobody is any definable person that I'm acquainted with.

OOU:I think that was a really good idea to come in from the back end like that because it really gives the reader the impression that the world was already before he came to it.

Kirby: I feel that way.Actually when we were all born the world was already here.All we had to do was unravel it in our own way.We're still doing it.

OOU:It just seemed so much more real than other comic stories because it's there and you're seeing it happen before your eyes instead of them telling you what's going to happen next,and you know what's going to happen next in most stories.This one,it's unpredictable.

Kirby: I feel that's sort of a reflection of life. You don't write a script for life.We can't call the shots on anything.There's gonna be spots in those stories where we can't call the shots on them.Where there's uncertainties, and insecurities. I feel that's real.

OOU: Earlier you were talking about how anybody, if they had the training and really put forth the supreme effort,could do almost anything.Is this the kind of character you want to show in this Mr. Miracle guy?

Kirby:Yes.Mr. Miracle is a superbly proffesional craftsman.He's a superb escape artist.He's a cool character.He'll play it cool to the very end. I have a scene where it looks like he's going to get killed,and it's going to happen in seconds,but he just lays there deliberatly trying to see how fast he can get out of there.He wants to see if he can beat those few seconds because he's a proffesional.That's what makes him a super escape artist. He'll put his life on the line to see how well he can do his craft.That's the kind of guy he is.

OOU:What's he do that makes him have to escape so much?

Kirby: That's his proffession.

OOU:Escaping?

Kirby: Yes. He'll bet you 10,000 dollars that he can get out of any trap you devise.If you lose you pay himm ten-thousand bucks.He puts his life on the line but that's his trade.

OOU:What's the connection between him and the New Gods?

Kirby: That has to be unraveled too.That's the fun of what I'm doing.I'm taking all these different types of characters and relating them to the New Gods.

OOU:Is this Supertown that the Forever people come from directly related with New Genisis?

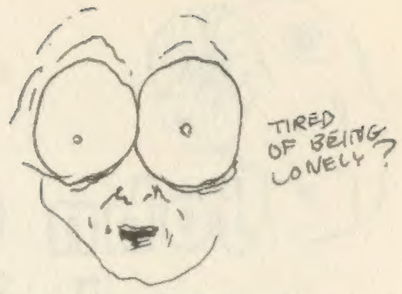
Kirby:Supertown is New Genesis.It's just that the children are young and they have their own terms for things.

OOU: So the Forever People are young Gods--Children of the New Gods.

Kirby: Yes.

OOU:And is Mr. Miracle part of the New Gods too?

Kirby: Mr. Miracle,strangely enough,comes from Apokolips.He's a defector from Apokolips.Mr. Miracle is a nice guy.He just doesn't think evil.He feels that he should have a good time.He'd like to live life cooly with tounge in cheek,and just playing it for the experience.They don't like that on Apokolips.Of course,they come after him.



OOU:Who rules New Genisis?

Kirby:The High Father.

OOU: IS he an Odin-type?

Kirby: Yes,he's an Odin-type except I can't call him odin--there is no more Odin.I've got to have a name that I think is important in this particular time.I call him what I think he should be called.

OOU:This concept,Supertown,is it going to be like the New Jerusalem concept which is all peace and happiness or is it going to have good and evil?

Kirby: It has good and evil in it because it has real people in it.Orion is a real person.Orion is a fearful god because he is afraid of himself. He wasn't born on New Genisis.Orion is a very fierce god because he has an inner hostility.He fights himself constantly because he knows that he's not from New Genisis and that he's capable of tremendous evil.

OOU:We consider Darkseid evil and ourselves good. Does Darkseid consider himself good and the other way of life evil?

Kirby:Yes,Darkseid considers anything evil that's going to stop him.If you stop me I consider you evil

Mrs. Kirby:I'm stopping you,you've got to eat.

All of us:Your evil,your evil.

(Later)

OOU:Why have they been redrawing some of your pictures of Superman?

Kirby:Nobody up there is used to me.In otherwords they're afraid of what I'm going to do and I' don't blame them.They know what Murphy Anderson can draw and Neal Adams and the rest but they don't know how I'm going to treat a thing like Superman,which has made maybe a hundred-twenty million dollars for them.Now I do it their way and I feel they were right.

OOU:Are any of the Supermen in the Forever people yours?Like this one on the cover.

Kirby:Yeah,that's mine.

OOU:I was talking to Leonard Star and I asked him if he thought that the young cartoonists were coming out of the art schools.He said he thought that wasn't so because what they're teaching now is distortion.How do you teach distortion? You have to start with the norm and then you go on from there.

Kirby:You teach distortion by doing comic books.

OUU:But there is a basic,a norm that you have to branch out from.Take Picasso,he painted very realistically and then took it a step further to distortion.

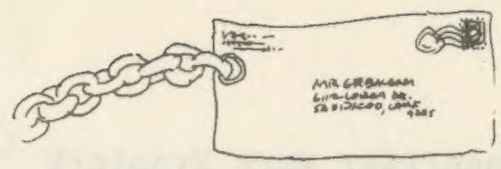
Kirby:No,Picasso is not distortion.Picasso is trying to take a two dimensional object and make it three dimensional which is insane.He can't do it.H e can draw fifty eyes and noses and heads and he still can't do it.You can't take a two dimensional object and make it three dimensional.

Of course Picasso did make an attempt at taking art down a new direction which makes him a great artist.

OOU:DO you like what Peter Max does?

Kirby oh I'm crazy abou it.Peter Max has made a bigger step than Picasso.I think he's made art less harsh and given it more form,more grace.I just can't explain the kind of admiration I have for Peter Max.

John Ostapkovich explains why the "Boom Tube Bombs"



There is a thunder in the distance,friend. Can you not hear it--that crashing roaring typonic serenade that is heralding the approach of that for which we have so long waited? But enough talk,we must look ahead,for there,there is the glow. And,Lord, how the very earth does quake beneath our feet! As it was forecast in the months before, as the final product of a prophecy that lingered maddeningly on our horizon,it has occured.It's here,here,I can see it!

Kirby! Kirby is here!

All hail!

Excuse me while I rise from my knees,a most uncomfortable position in which to communicate, one that makes for all sorts of interesting inhibitions I would just as soon avoid.Okay,now that I've climbed into the schock couch behind my typewriter,it looks like all systems are go.

You've seen them all,I suppose,the seven distinctly different Kirby presentations from D.C. thus far--four of Jimmy Olsen and one each in a string of new characters.Taking them one at a time,Jimmy Olsen is quite remarkable,transformed from a marshmallow of a comic into a blockbuster with enough plotting and imagination crammed into twenty-two pages to muscle you right off the toilet(oh,you read them there too,huh?);alas,that was about all we got.

Of the premiering mags,Mr. Miracle was by leaps and bounds the best,displaying more style and flair and human emotion than either or both of the other two,which finished midway in the category marked "good". Because The New Gods and The Forever People are so integrated as to be almost inseperable,they shall bear close scrutiny, however,moreso than the former book,a more conventional format.The heros,protagonists,if you prefer, are rather run-of-the-mill swashbuckling sorts,none of them generating enough interest to rank with Green Lantern or my mourned,lost and martyred X-Men.

Sure,Kirby is good,he always is. But...

It is not my style nor my desire to bury the King for his imagination which,as many of his contemporaries and countless fans have noted in a million places,a billion times,is stupendous, boundless,infinite, and all the rest of a universe of adorative adjectives. And yet,though I have no complaint with the content of the new work,I shal take issue regarding the way in which he presents it.

It is my contention that National should hire a author for the specific purpose of turning the "nouveau Kirby" into something that places his ideas and graphic skill in the forefront,but not dominant over the third aspect of the comic genre,the one that has been almost totalky ignored heretofore,that shadowy thing seperating the for so long from the piles and heaps of "acceptable" reading,that which Roy Thomas has practiced and strained for years to achieve, with merely momentary success.

Literature.

For the sake of those of you who might not know what I mean,I shall digress for a moment to explain what I see in this medium and how it should be used.To communicate is the basic goal here,as with television and movies,radio and books,though each form is an individual in itself by virtue of its own peculiar resources. Comics have,as opposed to TV's moving visual and audio,a still visual,a printed audio,plus the common use of thought exposition and narration. For best results,all four raw materials must be utilized if the finished product is to be worth anyone's time. They must intertwine,mingle,mix and swirl together,making purposefully obvious each one's dependence on the others.All are necessary in the spinning of a yarn,and if one is slighted or overblown it is the whole that suffers.

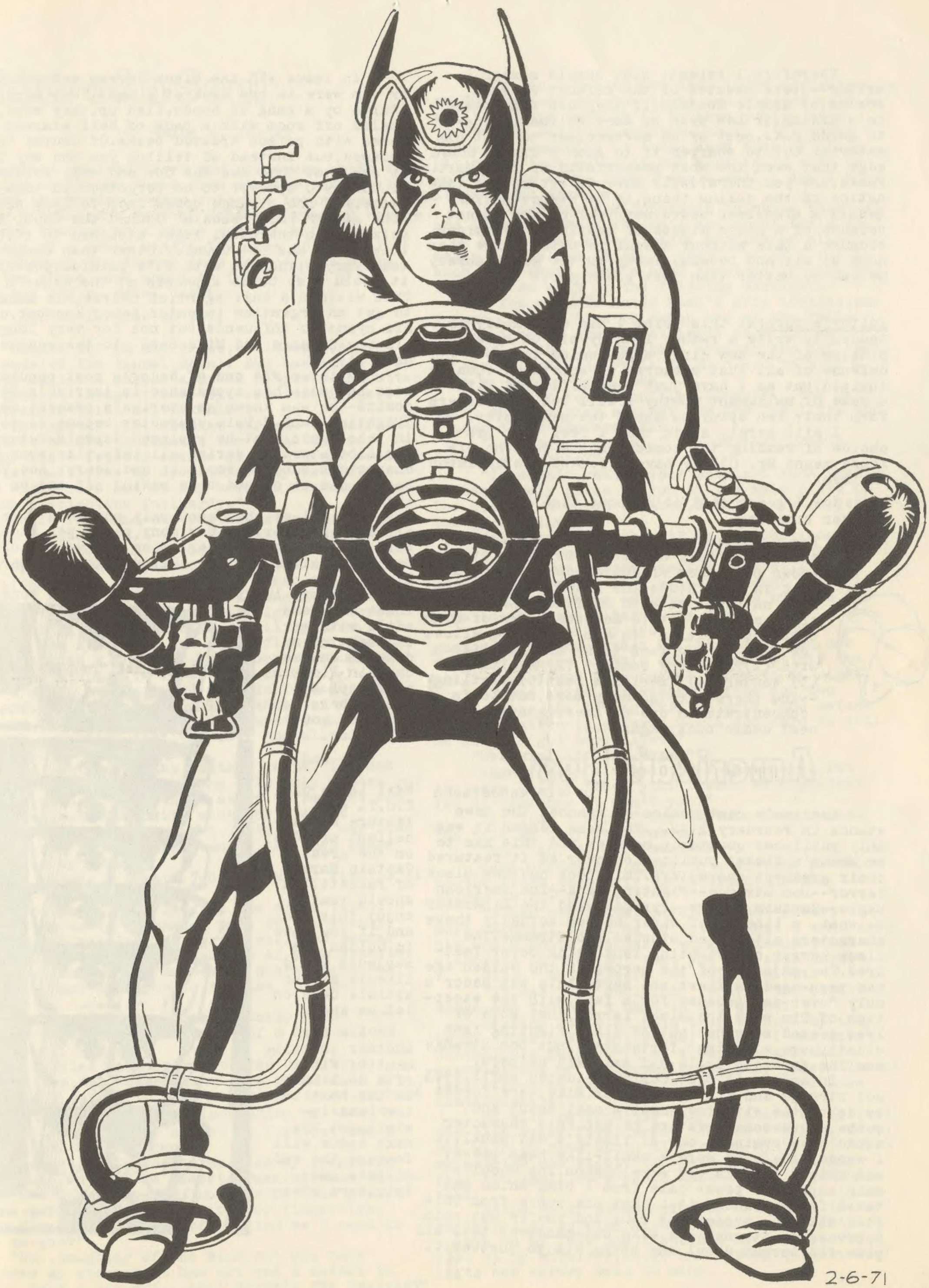
Of course, different writers attack any given problem in different manners,thus varying the amount and effect that each dimension of our medium has. The afforementioned Mr. Thomas,for example,is a narration buff,relying less on ballooned dialogue than his mentor.The overpowering Neal Adams will,by the force of his pencils, create in anything he does that characteristic aura of himself,as does Jack Kirby.

Thus,we have defined our terms.Literature is the successful and total integration of all aspects of any communications medium.

Jimmy Olsen 135 is a prime example of exactly how to lead a good mag astray.As I stated a while back,it was chock-full of ideas and action and a staggering amount of daring concepts yet no literature.Despite all that it was it had not attained that hallowed status,and remained nothing more than a comic book.From the rather blase splash panel at its genesis,the book rapidly(actually,instantaneously)disentegrated into pages and pages of pretty artwork serving no purpose other than as places to set word balloons. We saw the two masked unknowns putting to rest a horde of wiggling minature humans before embarking on a hasty,impromptu tour of their secret lab.During this journey,we as observers were subjected to an imformative and entirely contrived conversation between the pair in which they tell each other things so basic and fundamental to their tasks that there is no way they could <u>not</u> have already known them;therefore,this multi-paged scene grated on my nerves like the old nail on the blackboard.There is no reason that Mokkari should or would tell his partner,Simyan, that "we stole the first samples from the earthmen,but now we can make our own," because,from the way he spoke,Simyan knew just as much about what was going on as Mokkari.No reason at all-save the poor excuse of relating this to the readership.

This,and much of the rest of that issue,is by far the most nerve-wracking instance of this, though it existed to a lesser extent throughout everyone of the new mags,pervading them with a mental odor that I found hard to stomach

Another aspect,the one so frequently missed by scripters,not only Kirby,is that of inter-panel continuity. In panel X,the people are talking about something that is unrelated entirely to what they had been saying the picture before--and without a hint of connecting narration or dialogue--giving the piece a kind of chop-chop-chop,old-time movie,stuttering effect instead of the flowing stream of excellence of Avengers 57 and 66,to name just a couple.And those master-pieces were done by teams of men,not by a single creator. So,you can see why Kirby,working within the framework of the ultimate writer-artist rapport,is such a disappointment when he fails so heartbreakingly at the outset of this project.



2-6-71
JOHN POUND

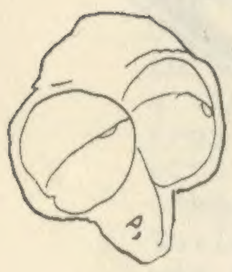
Therefore,I repeat, D.C. should assign a writer--Steve Skeates of the defunct Aquaman series,or Archie Goodwin,if they can find where he's hiding,or Len Wein or Marv Wolfman,even--to guide J.K.,sort of an advisor,not to edit his material but to sharpen it to such a finely honed edge that even the most pessemistic of fans(Martin Pasko,are you there?)will have to sit up and take notice of the coming thing.As it stands now,we behold a bladeless sword,deprived of its impact because of a grave misuse of available resources, because a tale without a soul is often worse than none at all and because Kirby is the King--surely he can do better than just plain good.

FINIS

Editor's turn:At this point I had originally intended to write a rather lengthy bit on my opinions of the new Kirby mags,coming to the defense of all that's sacred or something equally insipid,but as I have just been afflicted with a case of malignant apathy I will let the readers form their own opinions about the new comics.

I will merely state that I feel that his choice of reading the comics on the john(no offense meant Mr. O) may have affected his decision on them.

Now I guess that it's about time for another article--



For a Golden Age report for ARCHIVE this time let's talk a little bit on a little known publisher of comic books,today,but back in the 1940's the Nedor people ranked high on the list with DC,Timely,King and all the rest,Just to mention a few of their comic book titles is all the space allows How many of you fans today are familiar with (1)Thrilling Comics? (2) Exciting (3) Wonder (4) America's Best(5)Startling? --And there were so many more,but let's concentrate on one of America's all time best comic book magazines:

America's Best

by Jim Mendelsohn

America's Best Comics #1 reached the news stands in February,1942...For some reason it was only published quarterly,however,and this has to be Nedor's finest publication ever,as it featured their greatest characters.This book had the Black Terror--Doc Strange--Fighting Yank--The American Eagle--Captain Future--Pyroman--And the Liberator ...what a line up of super heroes.Actually these characters alternated stories,Doc Strange,The Black Terror,and Fighting Yank being cover featured.The majority of the heroes in the Golden Age had teen-aged partners,and maybe this was Nedor's only "over-do" because for a fact,with the exception of Tim with the Black Terror,they more or less seemed somewhat out of place.Fighting Yank didn't have a partner,fortunately,but Doc Strange and The American Eagle had said kid helpers.

In America's Best Comics #5,dated april,1943 Doc Strange and his kid partner,Mike,were forced to do battle with the Ghoul,a nazi agent and quite a gruesome creature he was.This character would have reminded one of Timely's Red Skull... I wonder why...he wore a skull-like head piece, and swipes in this era were common.The Ghoul's main supply of power came from a ring which was taken from an Incan idol.Just one punch from this fist with the mysterious ring and you're out cold. However,Doc Strange and Mike out-maneuver this all powerful German Ghoul and bring him to justice...

In issue #13 the Black Terror and young helper Jim were in one heck of a mess.They were captured by a gang of hoods.Tied up,they were,in a sealed off room with a pack of half starved vultures with poison treated beaks.Of course they escaped,but instead of telling you the way let me say that this was the one and only Golden Age of the 1940's,never to be forgotten.In this same issue,#13 Doc Strange comes face to face with "The Miner." This "Baddie" donned the usual miners helmet with the usual light attached to it,but this light was not usual...Other than causing temporary blindness with it's painful,powerful ray it could also cause hypnosis at the Miner's will. This villain,a Nazi agent,of course,had managed to get an Argentine inventor,Senor Escobar,under his hypnotic influence,but not for very long for old Doc Strange and Mike came to the rescue, naturally.

By issue #14 one of Nedor's most popular heroes had made his appearance in America's Best comics--He was known as America's bravest defender, "Fighting Yank." This character became so popular in this comic that he replaced Captain Future and The Liberator.Now during all this time some minor characters,such as Woman in Red,Secret Ace,The Lone Eagle, and so on had been making off and on showings.

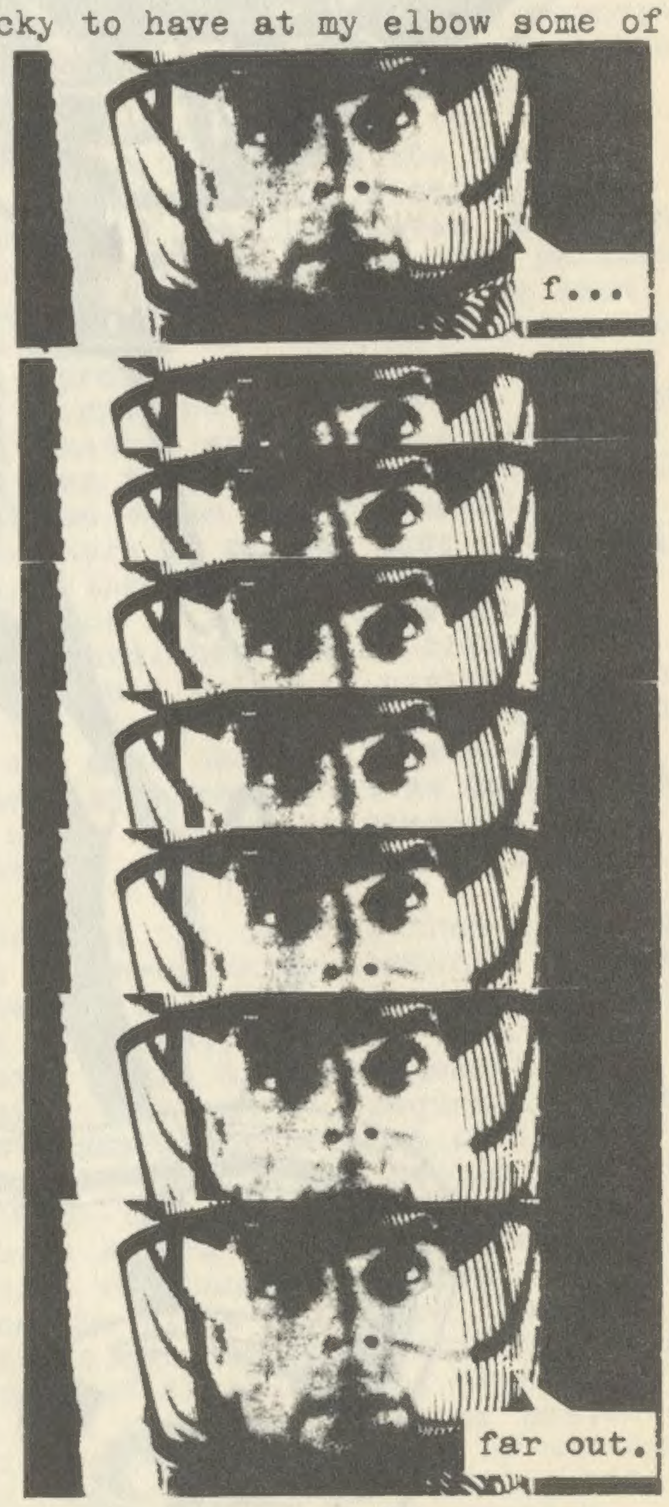
Now all of this cost only one thin dime,and all was in color,and how many pages per magazine?? Well,let's just say over twice the amount of today's so called comic books,and the adds were limited too.

I'm very lucky to have at my elbow some of these old gems still with me. In sight of my desk I can see Captain Flash comics,plus many others. Well,see you next time.

The End

Next issue of T.O.T. will feature an excellent article on the great Captain Marvel of Fawcett.You should really enjoy this one and if you have in Golden Age subjects you'd like to see an article done on let me know.

Now for another installment of Fiber of a Soul.This is the next to the last installment.The next issue will feature the end of this amaepic.Here goes--



Fiber of a Soul

by Wayne M. Turner

Synopsis:A semi-sorcerer and sorceress, with the ability to change their form at will,after being hurled two hundred years into the future by a super intelligent race of female dominated blacks, are now trapped in a stone passage with the captain of a naval vessle.The crew of the ship went through the tunnel in a trance-like state and the three were about to follow when they were cut off by metal doors.

III To Live,or to Defy

Sealed in! On all sides,solid rock,and at the ends of the tunnel,metal! But has metal ever bested magic? I choose a spell of power,and utter the ancient incantation. "By fear twas forged, by strength twill melt.HRALX!"

The mystic bolt sizzles through the air,but vanishes before it reaches the metal barrier! "Damn! These fellows are no fools.A black counter barrier nullified my spell,probably envelopes this whole cave.But we may have an advantage in the unexpected,the foolhardy."

While Tama and the Captain stand paralized by our predicament,I bolt into action;an action which seems to be a suicide mission!Since we know what is behind us,I rush at the door barring our progression forward.Like a flesh and bone missle I hurtle into the air,flying at my target. "Ki-ai!" I shriek, snapping my right leg forward and striking the metal with a killing blow.It buckles and klangs on the stone floor of the tunnel,slides a few feet,then rocks back and forth,and stops."Tin foil! Come on!"

I motion to Tama and Captain Talman to follow and,leping over the folded sheet of metal, race up the tunnel.In my excitement I outdistance them by a hundred feet,but slow and allow them to catch up.

"Mr. Mc Cray," the Captain gasps,"I'm not used to running,and hurrying will only hasten our meeting with..." he pauses,as if to retract his statement,but adds,"with whatever's ahead."

"Perhaps you are right,Captain.You may lead at your own pace,and Tama and I can then guage our speed by yours."

He misses a breath."Oh,that's all right.I'll follow."

Trotting in the lead up the stone tube,I soon bring us to a rougher part of the evenly illuminated passage.The curved walls,no longer of sedimentary rock,are made up of hewn granite. Also the incline and number of sharp turns has increased and I am forced to slow to a quick walk.

As I walk along the monotonous stone corridor,I suddenly become aware of a loss,a loss of hearing.

A muffled thunder,registered only by my subconcious,has ceased,leaving a ringing in my ears.But I cannot be sure about the sound,perhaps it was my own heart beating.Tuning my ears,so to speak,I listen,but naught do I detect,and I soon forget the incident.

The acclivity and turns slow my progress still more until I am almost trudging.Tama catches up and I hold my hand out for her.She grasps it and,caressing my palm with her fingertips, pouts,"Is this your way of telling me I need to lose weight?"

"Nay,Daughter of the Wind.But you have reminded my stomach it has not had a morsel in nearly half a day,and...hey! Where's the Captain?"

She looks behind her then turns and reassures me,"Oh,he just got too tired and started walking a little ways back.He'll be here pretty soon. You're too suspicious,Chris.Though I'll admit there is something in those dark eyes of his,a bit mysterious,actually.But especially when he was staring at me,like I was...well I don't know it was just strange."

I laugh but she continues thinking about it and I remark,"Well,we can't eat rocks.Let's go."

My muscles,after twenty minutes of climbing, begin to feel stiff.Boy,I didn't think I was in such poor shape.Tama's hand remained in mine,and together we walk up the twisting corridor.

A few moments later Tama's grip loosens,and I turn just in time to catch her as she falls limply into my arms.My strength ebbs and as I lay her on the cold stone I stagger and collapse on the ground also.Feels so good.Got to sleep... rest my bones.Fog,closes...

Can hear voices,muffled.Someone...the Captain! What're they saying? Ahh,the fog lifts and I hear their conversation.

"You knew the deal," the Captain growls. "Where's my ship?"

"It wasn't really your ship,you know that. It was merely given to you by the male clods of the U.A.C." A women speaker,familiar yet...yes, the girl,Trilan!

"Wait!The man awakens!" Trilan cautions.

I have learned enough.I no longer need feign sleep.But before opening my eyes,it is already apparent I am a prisoner.Rough stone is my bed,and shackles of metal pinion my arms and legs to the cold altar I lay on.

Upon opening my eyes I find,as I had guessed beforehand,that Trilan and Talman are the only others in this chamber,except for the still unconcious Tama,on the floor to my right.

"I was quite surprised to find you two still among the living,"Trilan says."And before that situation is altered,would you care to tell me how you got here,alive?"

"Certainly;I...we,swam."

Rage flashes in her black-amber eyes,but she asks coldly,"Need your lesson be repeated? You do remember it don't you?"

"It didn't work!" the Captain interrupts. "He told me they were faking!"

"Ohh? Ah,the girl awakens."

Tama,unhindered,rises to a sitting position on the floor.Seemingly undisturbed,she only glares at our captors.

Trilan continues;"Before I must resort to more harmfull measures to obtain what I want from him,would you;a resonable woman I assume;care to elaborate on the fact that you two swam here?"

"Yes," she answers,"We walked a bit."

"It was your decision!" snarls the black woman,and touches a band on her wrist.

Searing bolts of pain tear through my body as my bonds are electrified! Before I can exert control,the muscles in my arms,legs and back contract and my fingernails gouge my palms! In one last effort to gain control of my flesh,I lose consciousness!

My will returns,but only to allow me to feel the pain.Every fiber seems torn as I try to move. But with my mind again mine,so is my body.I relax my muscles,and slowly the pain subsides.I now feel two small,warm hands kneading my neck and back.

Being on my stomach,I roll over,only to be smothered by sobbing kisses from Tam.Salty tears splash on my face and I embrace my love as she sobs on my shoulder,until she slowly quiets and lifts her watery eyes to mine.

COLUCCI
71

"Not even Death can hunt you successfully." she says,a glint of awe in her sea-green eyes.

I suddenly realize I am no longer bound and that we are in a different room."What happened?" I ask,a bit confused.

"Well,when you buckled,you tore those silly things right out of the stone."She smiles a little. "Even though you were still,neither Talman or the girl would touch you for a few minutes;they just stood looking at you.Finally they decided they had better put you somewhere safe,and dragged you into this room which is adjacent to the first one. I followed and have been trying to wake you for about twelve minutes."

This rock cubicle is as bare as the first, except that there is a shiny copper table on a plastic pedistal;around which are three chairs of the same metal.Also,one of the walls is as smooth, dull grey instead of rough granite.

I sit in one of the tubular metal chairs,and Tama follows.I glance at the door and see that this room was not meant to be a prison,for it is made of wooden planks,easily shattered.

Suddenly the grey wall lights and there before us sits Trillan,in three dimensions! She smiles coldly and inquires,"Comfortable,my guests?"

I repress an urge to hurtle the table at her life-like effigy,and smile,convincingly.

"Good.A nasty accident,that was,awhile ago. I might even have killed you,and that would have been very unfortunate,for both of us." She is looking at Tama,expecting rage.

"You needn't worry about taking Chrisagon from me by killing him.You can't," she says mysteriously.

"Well,no matter.I have already gotten what I need from the fool Talman.He told me everything you told him,which ended his usefulness.But to prove my magnanimity,here is food." her image fades.

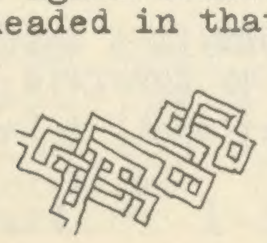
Quite unexpectedly,an oval in the center of the table descends into the pedistal,then returns laden with two steaming plates,impliments for eating,and two frosty flagons of juice.I slide a plate and glass to me and begin eating for the first time in two hundred years! I chuckle at the thought.

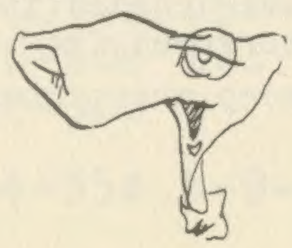
Each rimmed plate holds some sort of sea-food, probably squid;a small bird basted in a delicious sauce;and assortment of vegetables;and a thick slice of dark,warm bread.The drinks are tinted a slight green,and taste like what I imagine fermented mint leaves would taste like;great!

A while later my plate,and glass,are empty, and I realize that I must have eaten like a barbarian.I look at Tama a bit sheepishly,and see that her food is also gone! With her figure,I am sometimes amazed at the way she eats,though she is not a frail lady by any means.

I smile to myself as I remember the day I found her.The wind howled and pushed the waves to their violent doom on the rocks,and I stood on one of those rocks,in the embrace of the mother sea, and felt the rain slash at my naked flesh.Then, off to my right I saw,in the light of a thunderbolt,a body leap from one of the rocks,and I dove into the dark waves!

I can't really say why I dove in,but I figured that somebody,whoever he was,needed help.I swam like a barracuda,only missing the rocks because I sensed them ahead of me,and soon reached the spot where I had last seen the body.It wasn't there and I again sensed that it was further out at sea and headed in that direction.





I finally saw someone,and raced to "his" side.In another flash of lightning I saw that it was a girl,and a girl that made me instantly think of the tale about Aphrodite and her foamy birth.I was determined to save her,but just as I got to her side,she swam away,further out to sea! I decide to just wait and see what this girl would do next.

She stopped and looked back then swam to me and I saw the flames about her head,and the sea in her eyes,and I wondered where this blood-haired goddess was from;perhaps Asgard?

And though the storm raged about us in all its fury,it was as a summer day to what was inside me.

We swam;together;to a sandy,sheltered cove and there lay gasping and laughing until we could talk.But not words did we speak,but in the language of love;and the sand felt,and would not forget that night.

The video-wall again flashes to life and Trilan stands in front of us,an effect I still find startling.But instead of her usual cold features and calculated gestures,her dark eyes are wide with terror and,gesturing widly, she exclaims,"They've escaped!Talman told them about us and they've escaped and are coming here to kill me!"

She faints and slumps to the floor,just as the door behind her begins to splinter and crack!

I must reach Trilan before the mob,but how? The door to her room is nearly in pieces!There is one way,but can I concentrate hard enough in time?

All of my consciousness focuses inward,and then swimming through the psychic sea with the speed of thought,I arrive in Trilan's room,just as the mob surges in.

"Hold!" I roar,vibrating the walls more violently than even the clamoring mob.None enter the room,and the noise subsides.

"Who's that?" someone yells from the back of the corridor.

"Yeah!" the crowd responds.

Captain Talman,in the doorway,has to grip the walls to keep from being pushed through into the room.After a few men push their way in,behind Tallman,I again roar,"Hold!The next man in this room is dead!"

The shoving stops and a few already in the room retreat.

"If she's in there,let's get 'er!" another voice down the hall yells.

"Shut up!" the Captain commands.

I glare at the Captain and growl,"Are these your men?"

He stammers,"Yeah sure;most of them."

"What are you doing here?"

"Come for," he points at the prostrate form on the floor,"her."

He regains his confidence as more men edge in behind him."We must repay her for what she, and her people,did to us.You remember what she did to you,don't ya? You gonna stop us?"

I do not move,but clasp my hands behind my back and smile,slightly."Yes,I remember;yes I'm going to stop you."

"Who is he Captain?" a young man asks;young but almost herculean in appearence.

"Yeah,who is he?"

"No one,"the Captain responds."We came for her,we're gonna get her,right men!"

ANIMAL SCHOOL
BY CLARK AND POUND
ONE MORNING BEFORE SCHOOL, THE GANG HAS A SMOKE SESSION...
EEYOW! IT'S THE TEACHERS!
GET 'EM!
IT'S A BUST!
PADDY WAGON
WOW! WHAT A JOB! BUSTING STUDENTS FOR SMOKING CIGARETTES REALLY WEARS ME OUT!
ZOOM!
YEH! ME TOO! WHY DON'T WE GO TO THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE...
SCREE!
AND HAVE A SMOKE!

A half dozen men surge forward,Talman remains behind.I pity them and delay the meeting by questioning them."Why do you listen to him,the one you call Captain? He is a traitor."They halt.

"Why do you protect this...woman?"the young giant asks."You wear a work uniform like we do, and she cannot have control over you because she is unconcious."

Trilan stirs and rises,and stands behind me, while the group again advances."Ask the Captain why I called him a traitor."

The boy asks him,"What does he mean,traitor?"

"He's lyin'!Him and the girl are in it together.They're the ones who made you sweat; they're the ones who nearly killed us all off. But they won't do nothin' to us,ever again."

The young giant clamps his hand on Talman's shoulder,just as he begins to move in."Captain, you seem like a lyncher of the old West to me.Why did he call you a traitor?"

Talman breaks the grip and leaps at me!But he is far too slow,and I send him sprawling to the stone flor,clutching his stomach."He," I explain,pointing to the moaning figure on the floor,"was the one who brought you here.He is an agent of the forces who used you."

"You mean her,"the young man responds.

"But what did she,or any of her race,actually do to you?You all seem quite healthy,except for Talman.You yourself hardly look ready for mummification."

"You...are right.It is true they have worked us hard,but we were kept healthy.We were merely forced to work,and naturally wished to rebel.And also this girl,Trilan I believe,seems hardly the cold,calculating man hater Talman made her out to be."

I turn and look at the girl whom a moment before I had saved from being lynched.In her dark eyes there is no longer a cold,savage glint; it has been replaced with a slight but warm glow, and a more apparent emotion of bewilderment.

She exclaims almost apologetically,"You should not have risked your safety for mine;my life is not worth yours."

Her tone sounds like a plea,and she continues, "Don't you understand?...I'm not a living human, I was never born!I was created,conjured if you wish,out of the elements,and was given life by... a being of evil.Even now I have doomed myself by telling this to you,but now can you see what you have saved?"

"Yes,"I reply,"I see whom I have saved,a brave human being."

Talman has staggered to his feet and is leaning against the stone wall next to the door. He wonders aloud,"How the hell did you get in here,or were you here all the time?"His venemous tone is merely a cover for his humiliation.

"I used an ancient but nearly forgotten form of transportation,conscious molecular disruption, or teleportation."

"Oh,right wizard." Those who heard were chuckling and nudging one another.They have rapidly forgotten their vicious intent in coming to this room,and are now just standing around, waiting for something to do.

"Well,what say we get out of here and back to our country?"I inquire,not even thinking about that "our country."

"Good-bye," Trilan says softly.

"No,not good-bye.Come,you are going with us, to be free," the young,black hercules reaches his hand out for her.

"I could not leave here,even if I wanted to," she says hopelessly."As I said,my mast...creator has much power in the mystical realm of evil where he resides.We are more than shackled to wherever he wishes to keep us,for if we leave that place we will cease to exist in an unimaginably horrible "death".

"I must stay here,but you,all of you,must leave as soon as possible;he comes,and in his anger he will probably destroy this entire sub-complex you were working on.You must hurry!"

The urgency in her voice and the look of despair on her face are proof of the sincerity of her statements.She turns and disappears behind a tapestry-like drape that covers an opening in the wall.

I push my way through the mass of men in the hall and am not surprised to see Tama standing in the crowd."We are leaving,come on." She steps up to my side and we procede down the rock passage, in the lead of the group.

Following the passages leading upward,we can soon feel a breeze in our faces.The excitement of the men makes it seem like we are only going on a picnic to the country.The thin hall begins to widen and the lights in the ceiling are becomming more artificial looking.

Suddenly the stone roof angles sharply upward,and brilliant sunlight flows onto the rough,rock floor.Wide steps lead up to a huge rectangular opening and Tama and I rush up them to keep from being trampled by the wildly happy mob who are rolling up the stairs like a tidal wave.Before us is a veldt extending to the horizon,and behind us,the rough sea crashing on a rocky shore.I,no less than the rest,am drunk with the freedom.

Now for this issues message:

I have decided to sign off this issue with a line borrowed from one of my favorite pigs:

"Mneep,mneep,mneep--that's all folks!"

Balliwick,
Mike

#11

Mike Towry 3241 Mobley St. San Diego, California 92123

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